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EYES ONLY STEVENSON AND MCCLOY FROM PRESIDENT

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Your conversation with Kuznetsov shows progress on one important point but raises a number of questions on which I wish to comment.

If we can see and count for ourselves departing missiles and associated equipment, that will be an important forward step and we see promise in the procedures Kuznetsov proposed as long as it is clear that reliable observation, not Soviet photography alone, is essential.

One serious gap in Kuznetsov's proposal respecting missiles is the absence of any reference to nuclear warheads. Our interest in their absence is intense, and you should emphasize to all Soviets that

[REDACTED] we need assurances on warheads as much as on missiles themselves. Moreover, we need to know about possible warheads for IL-28's and even MIG 21's.

This warhead problem highlights the general importance of

Drafted by:

White House: McG. Bundy

Telegraphic transmission and

acknowledgment received by The Under Secretary

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host-removal verification in Cuba itself. Forty-two missiles is a plausible number and not inconsistent with our own reports, but Soviet figures, while genuinely useful, are not a wholly reliable basis for action. In this connection you should not hesitate to press home with Kuznetsov the fact that past Soviet deception remains a major element in our reaction to this whole episode. It may be true, as Kuznetsov argues, that the Soviets had no obligation to tell us exactly what they were doing in a country like Cuba, but what actually happened in this case was that they repeatedly gave us assurances of what they were not doing. These assurances came from highest levels, and proved absolutely false.

— Your insistence on the removal of IL28's, the unacceptability of any submarine support facility, and obvious Soviet involvement in SAM complex are all correct and worth repeating insistently. You are also right to resist guarantees on subversion and to keep Guantanamo out of it.

With respect to U.S. guarantees, we are not yet ready to give you more detailed instructions, but these three general points may be helpful:

(1) No long-term arrangements can be settled until after we have reached clear understanding on verified removal of offensive weapons systems, including IL28's.

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(2) US-approved right of surveillance will be kept intact and is important to both sides as last week's flights showed. In this connection you should report to Kuznetsov that today one of our low-level flights was harassed by MIG's apparently manned by Soviets. No damage was done, and it is not clear that MIG's fired, but episode provides good basis for you to drive home our view of critical importance of unimpeded surveillance unless and until better arrangements can be made. You should remind Kuznetsov that surveillance must and will continue, and that further interference will be sure to bring prompt reactions including armed action if necessary.

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Note-Passed Principle Officers Executive Committee per Mr. Little 33

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